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## WHAT DOES THE SECRETARY OF STATE MEAN?

BY FREDERICK McCORMICK.

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A LITTLE less than a year ago a strong public defence of American ideals in diplomacy and American foreign policy was made both by the President and the Secretary of State of the United States.

The governments of six foremost nations of the world listened with more general concern to these expositions of American diplomacy, both of which were in part the outcome of world-wide criticism of the Washington Government, than did their immediate audiences. Those nations know that American foreign affairs are more important than Americans know them to be. But in addition they seek some clew to what American action must be when the nation itself recognizes that it has vital foreign affairs. "Impossible but unavoidable" as Americans have come to be to them diplomatically, they recognize in Americans as a nation an undisciplined, perhaps uncontrollable, force and intelligence awaking to the presence of a phenomenon.

At the close of a great decade that has seen the extension of American influence to all quarters, American affairs, affected by the tribes and peoples and consonant with the times, have made strides overnight. This expansion has been almost without a prophet, for Americans have not known that their interests could attain more than a given magnitude abroad because of certain great American reasons that assigned foreign affairs to Europe—foreign affairs, in the minds of Americans, being thought to endanger the welfare of the Republic. It was not apparent until recently that every people discharging its duty in the quarter where its first duty is owing, thereby inevitably comes to its duties abroad, that the two go together, that no country is so incompetent, corrupt and weak as that which has no foreign

affairs, and, finally, that while the first responsibility is at home, no people can do its full duty to itself without doing its duty abroad.

So late as the time of Ambassador Porter's removal without warning from his post in France, some Senators said that America had no foreign affairs, and that diplomatic posts abroad were only social positions for rich and socially ambitious American families. That was at a time when American foreign interests had developed more rapidly than had the foreign interests of any nation or empire that ever existed, unless perhaps some empire like the Mongol. American principles that had become established in international law partook of the laws of the stable, enduring Republic based on the highest ideals in international dealing. The Monroe doctrine, for example, was and is a part of international law. It is law in half the globe. The "open door" is all but international in authority. If with such prestige America has the full character and capabilities as a world power that Americans believe her to possess, they hardly dare estimate their foreign interests and responsibilities, to say nothing of dangers.

It may be said that the relation between her great native affairs and foreign affairs for America is about equal, while, as a matter of fact, the nation has assumed a moral attitude in international relations which, if the Government has planned out its great foreign policy and is successful in living up to its creed, appears to involve responsibilities more onerous and weighty than the responsibilities of the most alliance-entangled European state it could possibly pity. This means that Americans are to pay for their principles or repudiate them.

In the light of these facts, coupled with the Government's anxiety about foreign affairs, Americans may ask what it means when the two highest members of their Government set out to explain its diplomacy.

The responsibility for these foreign affairs is popularly assigned to the Secretary of State. As the President's address referred to was a defence of the foreign policy of the Government as carried out by the Secretary of State and was a eulogy of the Secretary of State who himself reiterated the exposition of the Government's position in foreign affairs, the nation may ask with reference to such emphatic expositions, What does the Secretary of State mean?

The importance of North, Central and South American affairs, which to the popular mind are embraced in the Monroe Doctrine, the first great law of American diplomacy, has increased. Just before the Senatorial opinions referred to were uttered the problem of the Monroe Doctrine had been augmented by the questions that are called into the diplomatic arena by such names as Porto Rico, Tutuila, Guam, the Philippines, the Isthmian Canal Zone, etc. But great as were the considerations of responsibility under those two simple words, "Monroe Doctrine," there had been then added to our diplomatic vehicle and to international law two other words of equal simplicity which obviously even then to any careful observer defined what might become as great a question for the country as the "Monroe Doctrine." "Americans are a commercial people." They make and sell. From the nature and instincts of Americans has sprung the expression "open door," two words in which is seen, positively or negatively, the whole character of America and Americans. In the "open door" and equal opportunity for all are woven the questions of the Far East and all other questions above mentioned as having been added to the Monroe Doctrine since 1898, besides yet other considerations. For example, this policy of equal opportunity of trade contestants abroad has at all times been exposed to the chance of being forced into the place of becoming America's greatest foreign question by some nearly unnoticeable passing event. It is not impossible, indeed, that such a thing as the building of half a dozen war-ships, to say nothing of the Isthmian Canal, could, in this present world of foreign affairs, raise the "open door" to be a greater question for America than it seems possible the "Monroe Doctrine" could ever become, and then it would be a great active issue and an even more insistent public responsibility. Intrinsically and potentially, it is the greater question and issue.

Out of the tangled mass of foreign problems of the future which Americans must solve will stand some great principle. No one can doubt that it must be the "open door" which is already a part of that expansion and development of America which cannot be kept down and that expansion of China which is absolutely necessary.

It is, however, not essential to advance so far at one leap. No one can doubt the great and increasing importance of

America's national welfare abroad and its relation to her security and prosperity at home. John Hay, Elihu Root and Philander Chase Knox have all defined the "spirit and purpose" of American diplomacy, explained its principles and their origin in the traditions of the nation, and laid its great importance upon the conscience of the people in a timely and solemn way. Each explanation was called for by occasion and each occasion called for the attention of the nation. Each called louder than before. On May 2d, the date of the President's address delivered in behalf of the Government's foreign policy and the Secretary of State, and on June 15th when Mr. Knox reiterated the President's exposition of American diplomacy, the nation had a greater call to hearken to the Secretary of State on account of the nation's increased responsibilities abroad than ever before in the history of its foreign affairs. A nation cannot ignore external affairs. If it has no great foreign affairs it will not only lack greatness, but it will also be incapable in some of the essentials of nationality. Moreover, America without great foreign affairs cannot remain in the forefront of nations. It is not probable that if the country is to continue great and prosperous a time will ever come again when it can overlook or forget the question, What does the Secretary of State mean?

It follows, therefore, that diplomacy is a term which must become an American household possession. If for no other reason than that the ways of diplomacy are strange to the spirit of the people of the United States they have an immeasurable meaning to them. It is the beginning of the foreign era for the nation wherein the importance of official words and the value of knowing what they mean become the business of every American.

In whatever garment official utterances on foreign questions may in future come, they must necessarily be substantially concerned with America's great responsibilities in her foreign rôle outside those late boundaries within which no force could confine her. And it is essential that such utterances are understood in the country at large. The nation henceforward must know what the Secretary of State means.

America has joined Britain and Germany in leading world affairs. It can be readily shown that the American State Department is not doing its work with a capacity com-

mensurate with that task. Its fundamental infirmities in connection with the American system would preclude such adequacy. But its infirmities and errors do not prevent the nation from actually taking its place with the foremost diplomatic nations. It rather shows the necessity of progress in the country at large to force the Government into greater efficiency and to call upon the public to note its own responsibilities. For itself, the public is obliged to possess a considerable independent knowledge of its own on foreign affairs.

As the Government has emphasized the present by its exposition of American diplomacy and its foreign-affairs policy—a confession of the urgency and importance of those affairs—what, then, in effect, does the Government mean? The striking fact in Washington regarding foreign affairs is that the Secretary of State's Department has been forced into reorganization in order to care for increased work. Where one "department" existed before there are now at least five. In Washington, America has branched out to take care of that great foreign policy which places her on a diplomatic par with the nations at the top. What has brought this about?

The questions of the Far East necessitated the reorganization of all America's foreign affairs and of the State Department. Those questions created the "open-door" policy. The American question in China and Japan compelled the reform of the whole American consular service and later forced reorganization of the American diplomatic service. It caused the organization of the battleship fleet and its voyage around the world, and it is the impetus of the expansion of the navy. It has brought Far-Eastern finance to New York and Washington, it has taken American securities to Europe, and it has made the development of China and the Far East a part of America's own political and industrial expansion. It will be seen at once that with America's traditions on the subject of foreign affairs nothing could have produced this miracle except a great force capable of stirring the Government and nation from the bottom. Historically, the diplomatic activity of the United States is concerned with questions of the Americas. The rise of the Pacific is new. Toward Europe America has had that negative law of no alliances, in her own hemisphere no extension of European power. But this policy left out

one-half of the world and its highway by which the whole world could get access to her. America was bound in time to meet the world upon the Pacific and she has met it. All the outside world can get at America through East Asia and all the world is there now.

Although in defence of American foreign politics the addresses of May and June reviewed relations with Britain, for example, back to 1794, and sketched our relations with all Europe and South America, yet one-third of the addresses on direct foreign questions refer to the Far East, with which we have had treaty relations little more than sixty years. These addresses bristle with America's Eastern diplomatic history, the "open door" and "equal opportunity," neutralization of territory in time of war and of property in other times, freedom of China and neighboring lands from political restraint, mediation in times of injustice and oppression, benevolence, aid in reform, peace, and so forth. First and last is the Government's official struggle to bring peace into the world. The word "peace" has become so insistent in this connection that it has even a sinister meaning. It is a word with a sermon in it and should command public attention on account of the relatively superior effort which America makes in an official direction for the attainment of that ideal. Is it because, pending discussion, America's war needs are so serious that she needs a guarantee of peace and her officials and leaders think the Government incapable of preparing for, or meeting, war on a scale adequate with the nation's possible needs?

The vitality of the Far-Eastern question lies in the fact that America has found her active and future great policy there. Its lines are formed and its grip is upon America's national life. Not only the diplomatic silence of the Secretary of State, but his spoken words say in substance that the questions of the Pacific have formed this final policy. America has met the world on the Pacific and is surrounded by political obligations and responsibilities in just the way that European states are surrounded. What the Secretary of State means is that the era of pious isolation for America is ended finally. She must live in the open, contending on diplomatic lines with the nations in the knottiest problems with which human government is afflicted, sometimes perhaps fighting it out on even meaner lines than appear to exist between those European states she lately sympathized

with and yet pitied. What the Secretary of State means is that the time has passed which could ever again justify the people of the nation, or any considerable portion of them, in "going up into the air" after the manner of their aboriginal predecessors, the Indians, when confronted as they have been several times, notably with social questions with Japan on the Pacific coast. It means that the nation should be initiated in foreign affairs so that the responsibilities of any situation may be met by the united nation with coolness. The nation has seen the renaissance of the navy to support American ideas. America has several times challenged Europe and Asia in the Far East. John Hay bound the Far East to the dominion of the State Department. Under the name of Philander Chase Knox, America is established in the midst of China and Far-Eastern affairs. The President has pronounced Peking to be the most important post in America's foreign service. In effect, all explanations of American diplomacy now and for perhaps a quarter of a century to come must be on behalf of the Far East. It is to this point that the constant attention of the great Powers is directed. America's position, exploits and intentions in that quarter possess a vital interest for them and their attention cannot be removed from the spectacle in the Pacific. But more important than their convictions, America herself will never again be allowed to neglect the Far East for an hour, because in that arena America must contend for the greatest principles of international relations yet championed by her.

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